

Shipping from China to Tawau

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Asia Pacific

China → Tawau · via TWU air / Tawau sea · clearance by Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM)



Cargo handling on the China-Tawau lane.

Freight from China into Tawau clears through TWU air / Tawau sea. Tawau is south-east Sabah port near the Indonesian border, and allow +1 day for the inland leg on top of clearance.

The clearing authority is Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM). Historical dwell on this gateway is around 2-4 days, and it lengthens in Sep-Nov.

Duty, tax and clearance into Tawau

Imports into Malaysia are cleared by Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM). The headline position is: Sales tax 5-10% plus 10% low-value-goods tax on online orders under MYR 500; duty 0-30%, largely 0% under ACFTA. The de-minimis threshold is MYR 500 (low-value goods sold online are taxed regardless).

Conformity is the part most first-time importers underestimate: SIRIM certification and MCMC label for electrical and radio products; halal certification for food ingredients. Getting this wrong is expensive because it usually cannot be fixed after the cargo has landed.

Restrictions and known friction points for Malaysia: Electrical goods without a SIRIM label are routinely detained. Alcohol, e-cigarettes and vape liquid are restricted. Direct-to-consumer parcels are subject to the low-value goods tax collected at the point of sale.

Routing and transit on this lane

Peninsular Malaysia is served through Port Klang and Tanjung Pelepas with very frequent South China sailings. East Malaysia (Sarawak and Sabah) is a separate customs territory in practice — cargo transships at Klang or Singapore and adds 5–8 days plus a second clearance step, so quote Kuching and Kota Kinabalu separately.

Air gateways used	KUL (Kuala Lumpur), PEN (Penang), BKI (Kota Kinabalu)
Air transit, China to gateway	3–5 business days
Sea gateways used	Port Klang, Tanjung Pelepas, Penang
Sea transit, China to gateway	5–9 calendar days
Gateway serving Tawau	TWU air / Tawau sea
Inland leg to Tawau	+1 day from the gateway
Typical clearance / dwell	2–4 days
Peak season to plan around	Sep–Nov



Handling on the TWU air / Tawau sea routing serving Tawau.

What to sort out before the cargo leaves China

- Book earlier than the transit time suggests during Sep–Nov, when space on this lane tightens.
- Ask for the HS code in writing from your supplier and verify the Malaysia duty rate against it yourself.
- Put the Tawau delivery address, contact name and phone number on the invoice, not just the packing list.
- Budget for the inland leg: +1 day beyond gateway clearance to reach Tawau.
- Photograph carton markings and seal numbers before departure — it makes any claim far easier to settle.
- Plan around the China-side windows too: Chinese New Year and Golden Week both compress capacity on the Malaysia lane.

Air, sea or overland into Tawau?

Mode	Transit to gateway	Best suited to
→ Air Freight	3–5 business days	time-critical, high-value and low-volume cargo
☐ Sea Freight	5–9 calendar days	volume cargo where cost per kilo matters more than speed

Transit shown is China departure to the Malaysia gateway and excludes the +1 day inland leg to Tawau and 2–4 days of clearance.

Mode guides for Tawau

- → [Air Freight to Tawau](#)
- ☐ [Sea Freight to Tawau](#)

Frequently asked questions

How long does shipping from China to Tawau take?

China to the Malaysia gateway is 3–5 business days by air, 5–9 calendar days by sea. On top of that, allow 2–4 days of clearance with Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) and a +1 day inland leg to Tawau.

What duty and tax will I pay importing into Tawau?

Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) applies: Sales tax 5–10% plus 10% low-value-goods tax on online orders under MYR 500; duty 0–30%, largely 0% under ACFTA. The de-minimis position is MYR 500 (low-value goods sold online are taxed regardless). Under a DDP arrangement these are pre-paid, so nothing is collected on arrival in Tawau.

Which port or airport does cargo for Tawau clear through?

Cargo for Tawau is routed via TWU air / Tawau sea. Sea gateways for Malaysia are Port Klang, Tanjung Pelepas, Penang; air gateways are KUL (Kuala Lumpur), PEN (Penang), BKI (Kota Kinabalu). We pick whichever gives the shortest total door time for your address.

What documents does Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) require?

A commercial invoice with HS codes, a packing list, the bill of lading or air waybill, a certificate of origin where it lowers duty, and any product certification (SIRIM certification and MCMC label for electrical and radio products; halal certification for food ingredients). We prepare and file these as part of the service.

How is the chargeable weight calculated for Tawau?

We compare actual gross weight against volumetric weight — length × width × height in centimetres divided by 6000 for air — and bill the greater of the two, rounded up to the next kilogram. Light, bulky cargo is almost always billed on volume.

Is sea freight cheaper than air freight into Tawau?

Per kilo, yes — usually by a wide margin. The trade-off is time: 5–9 calendar days by sea versus 3–5 business days by air to the Malaysia gateway, before clearance and the +1 day inland leg. The crossover point is normally somewhere between 100 and 300 kg depending on the density of your cargo.

Other delivery cities in Malaysia

- [China to Bintulu](#)
- [China to Samalaju](#)
- [China to Lahad Datu](#)
- [China to Sibu](#)
- [China to Sandakan](#)
- [China to Kuala Lumpur](#)
- [China to Shah Alam](#)
- [China to Klang](#)
- [China to Johor Bahru](#)
- [China to Penang](#)
- [China to Ipoh](#)
- [China to Melaka](#)

[All Malaysia freight information →](#)

References & official sources

Duty rates, thresholds and conformity requirements for Malaysia change by ministerial decision, sometimes mid-year. The figures on this page are buyer-planning references, not a customs ruling — confirm the current position for your own HS code with Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) or your broker before you ship.

- [Royal Malaysian Customs Department](#)
- [SIRIM QAS International](#)
- [Port Klang Authority](#)
- [WTO — Tariff Profiles \(applied MFN duty by country\)](#)

- [IATA — Lithium battery shipping guidance \(PI 965–970\)](#)
- [World Bank — Logistics Performance Index](#)
- [ICC — Incoterms 2020 rules \(DDP, DAP, FOB definitions\)](#)

Page data last reviewed: August 2026.

Shipping by industry

This page covers the route and clearance picture for the destination. Packing, classification and the compliance step that actually holds a shipment depend on what you are sending — these guides cover that by commodity.

- [Aluminum Coils Steel & Metal Materials](#)
- [Pipe Fittings Metal Products & Industrial Components](#)
- [Assembly Line Equipment General Machinery & Industrial Equipment](#)
- [Semiconductor Equipment Specialised Production Machinery](#)
- [Transformers New Energy, Power & Electrical](#)
- [Brake Parts Automotive & Vehicles](#)
- [Ceramic Tiles Building Materials & Construction Products](#)
- [Bathroom Products Building Materials & Construction Products](#)
- [Engineering Plastics Plastics, Rubber & Packaging](#)
- [Ceramic Components Glass & Ceramic Products](#)
- [Data Center Equipment Telecom, Computing & Data Centre](#)
- [Home Appliances Home Appliances, HVAC & Commercial](#)

[All 139 industry guides →](#)

FCL Container Rates — China to Tawau

Live port-to-port ocean freight for a full container into Tawau, by origin port. Ocean freight only — origin haulage, customs clearance and destination delivery are quoted separately.

Shekou → Tawau

Container	Rate (USD)
20GP	1,500
40HQ	2,850

- Carrier: STIC

[Full route page — Shekou to Tawau →](#)

Spot allocations move week to week — reconfirm the rate against the current sailing before booking.

Price Trend — Tawau

Live rate for the linked route page, shown here for a quick read before you click through.

Get a rate for Tawau

This lane is quoted per shipment rather than from a published rate card, because the landed cost depends on the commodity, its density, the conformity requirements above and the delivery point. Send the cargo details and we will come back with a full DDP figure.

[Request a quote](#) → [See the Malaysia route page](#) →

Freight Rates to Malaysia

Current published rates — USD

☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,200.00**

40HQ **USD 2,250.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,250.00**

40HQ **USD 2,350.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 950.00**

40HQ **USD 1,750.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,250.00**

40HQ **USD 2,350.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,350.00**

40HQ **USD 2,550.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,500.00**

40HQ **USD 2,850.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,350.00**

40HQ **USD 2,550.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,500.00**

40HQ **USD 2,850.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,500.00**

40HQ **USD 2,850.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

☐☐ SEA

Sea · FCL Port-to-Port (Spot)

20GP **USD 1,500.00**

40HQ **USD 2,850.00**

Updated 2026-08-14

📦 Cargo Weight (KG)

☐ Enter the actual gross weight of your shipment in kilograms. If you're unsure, fill in the volume fields below and we'll calculate it for you.

☐ Or enter volume (cm) — volumetric weight ÷ 6000

× ×

Non-integers rounded up. Larger of actual vs volumetric is used.

☐ Number of Boxes

Total chargeable weight = weight per box × number of boxes.

⚠ When you have not filled in the volume information, our prices may be inaccurate.